

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that three small businesses in Sullivan and Ulster Counties have been awarded grants through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. Hinchey has supported REAP since its creation and this year used his position on the House Appropriations Committee to prevent a Republican effort to eliminate funding for the program.

"Direct investments in alternative energy and energy efficiency help create jobs, stimulate economic growth, save money over the long run, reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy and upgrade the quality of our environment," said Hinchey. "These grants will help local companies make important investments that will save them money and grow their businesses. Improving our economy and supporting job creation is absolutely essential right now. I'm proud to have worked to protect a program like Rural Energy for America, which assists small businesses throughout our part of New York."

Details on the three grants follow:

- Martin Eckert will use a \$2,931 REAP grant to improve the energy efficiency of his maple syrup operation in West Shokan (Ulster County). The grant funds will reimburse 25 percent of the cost of purchasing new, energy-efficient evaporation equipment, including a pre-heater that will warm the raw sap before it enters the pan, reducing boiling time and fuel use. Mr. Eckert expects the equipment to reduce his use of fuel oil by nearly 50 percent.
- John and Janine Stockin, who produce maple syrup at Lyonsville Farm in Accord (Ulster County), will use a \$10,468 REAP grant to reduce the cost of purchasing new energy-efficient equipment. They plan to install a sap preheating system that brings sap close to boiling before it reaches the evaporator, increasing boiling rates and dramatically reducing fuel usage. They will also add a more efficient wood combustion chamber to further increase the efficiency and speed of sap boiling.
- Jill Wiener, owner of Promo-to-Go LLC, operates two businesses in one building in Callicoon Center (Sullivan County). She arranges and sells flowers, and makes and sells pottery. Ms. Wiener will use a \$10,130 REAP grant to cover 25 percent of the cost of installing a 7 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system at her business to reduce her electricity expenditures by over 60

percent. As a result, she will be able to control much of her utility costs for the 25- to 30-year life of the solar electric generating system.

A 2008 Farm Bill initiative, REAP offers funds for farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. These federal funds leverage other funding sources for small businesses. In all, USDA announced more than \$11.6 million in energy grants today.